

# Matters Related to **FASTING**

أحكام الصيام



Muhammad Ṣāliḥ Al-Munajjid

In the Name of Allah,  
the All-Compassionate, All-Merciful

**Title: MATTERS RELATED TO FASTING**

**Author: Muhammad Ṣāliḥ al-Munajjid**

**English Edition 1 (1999)**

**English Edition 2 (2004)**

**Layout: IIPH, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**

**Filming & Cover Designing: Samo Press Group**

# Matters Related to Fasting

الصيام

by

Muhammad Ṣāliḥ al-Munajjid

International Islamic Publishing House

**© International Islamic Publishing House, 2004**  
***King Fahd National Library Cataloging-in-Publication Data***

Al-Munajjid, Muhammad ibn Ṣāliḥ

**Matters related to fasting.** / Muhammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Munajjid,- Riyadh, 2004

...p ; 20 cm

1- Fasting

I-Title

ISBN: 9960-672-15-8

252.3 dc      2898/21

Legal Deposit no. **2898/21**

ISBN Soft Cover: **9960-672-15-8**

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the Publisher.

International Islamic Publishing House (IIPH)  
P.O.Box 55195 Riyadh 11534, Saudi Arabia  
Tel: 966 1 4650818 — 4647213 — Fax: 4633489  
E-Mail: [iiph@iiph.com.sa](mailto:iiph@iiph.com.sa) — [www.iiph.com.sa](http://www.iiph.com.sa)

---

---

*Please take part in this noble work  
by conveying your comments to IIPH  
through e-mail, fax or postal-mail address.*

# LIST OF CONTENTS

PUBLISHER'S NOTE	07
INTRODUCTION	09
MATTERS RELATED TO FASTING	13
Definition of <i>ṣiyām</i> (fasting)	13
Ruling on fasting	13
The virtues of fasting	15
The benefits of fasting	18
Etiquette and sunnah of fasting	20
What should be done during this great month?	26
Some of the <i>aḥkām</i> (rulings) on fasting	27
How the onset of Ramaḍān is determined	29
Who is obliged to fast?	30
Travellers	33
The sick	38
The elderly	43
<i>An-Niyyah</i> (intention) in fasting	45
When to start and stop fasting	48

## 6 *List of Contents*

Things that break the fast	51
The following things do <u>not</u> break the fast	53
Ruling on fasting for women	66
 GLOSSARY	 73
SYMBOLS USED IN THIS BOOK	76
TRANSLITERATION CHART	77

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Fasting is a pillar of Islam (others are, the testimony, *Ṣalāh*, *Zakāh*, and *Ḥajj*). This pillar of Islam, which was also known as incumbent on all other believers before the Message of Islam, should be practised out of the knowledge of its rulings and understanding of many matters related to them, about which many people know only little. To perfect this pillar, Muslims are presented with this valuable book which features out most of the problems and matters they may face during Ramaḍān.

Ramaḍān is a month of blessings and good deeds, during which everyone observing true *ṣiyām* (fasting) is multiply rewarded. Forbidden things are mentioned in detail and are to be prevented, and good deeds are explained to be encouraged. It is a month of repentance and self-reproach. The author has made a good effort to make this book a really beneficial one. To fast properly, one should first know fasting and its '*fiqh*' (jurisprudence), as scholars always point out that knowledge should precede deed.



May Allah (ﷻ) (the Exalted), reward the author and ourselves and make us truly knowledgeable in our '*deen*' (religion) and may Allah's blessings and peace be upon Prophet Muhammad, his family, Companions and whoever follows them till the Day of Reckoning.

Muhammad 'Abdul-Muhsin Al Tuwaijri

International Islamic Publishing House

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

1425 AH / 2004 CE

# INTRODUCTION

Praise be to Allah (ﷻ), we praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evil of our own selves and from our evil deeds. Whomsoever Allah guides none can mislead, and whomsoever He leaves astray none can guide. I bear witness that there is no true god except Allah Alone, with no partner or associate, and I bear witness that Muhammad (ﷺ) (Blessings and Peace be upon him), is His slave and Messenger.

Allah has blessed His slaves with certain seasons of goodness, in which *ḥasanāt* (rewards for good deeds) are multiplied, *sayyi'āt* (bad deeds) are forgiven, people's status is raised, the hearts of the believers turn to their Master, those who purify themselves attain success and those who corrupt themselves fail. Allah has created His slaves to worship Him, as He (ﷻ), says:

﴿وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ﴾ (٥٦)

(سورة الذاريات : ٥٦)

﴿And I [Allah] created not the jinn and men except that they should worship Me [Alone].﴾

(Qur'an 51: 56)

One of the greatest acts of worship is fasting, which Allah has made obligatory to His slaves, as He (ﷻ) says:

﴿... كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ﴾  
(سورة البقرة: ١٨٣)

﴿... Observing *aş-Şiyām* [the fasting] is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become *al-Muttaqoon* [the pious].﴾

(Qur'an 2: 183)

Allah (ﷻ) encourages His slaves to fast:

﴿... وَأَنْ تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

(سورة البقرة: ١٨٤)

﴿... And that you fast is better for you, if only you know.﴾

(Qur'an 2: 184)

He guides them to give thanks to Him for having made fasting obligatory to them:

﴿وَلْتُكْرِزُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ﴾  
(سورة البقرة: ١٨٥)

﴿... that you should glorify Allah for having guided you so that you may be grateful to Him.﴾

(*Qur'an* 2: 185)

He has also made fasting dear to them, and has made it easy so that people do not find it too hard to stop eating, drinking, and whatever they are used to do. Allah (ﷻ) says:

(سورة البقرة: ١٨٤) ﴿أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ ...﴾

﴿For a fixed number of days...﴾ (*Qur'an* 2: 184)

He has mercy on them and keeps them away from difficulties and harm, as He (ﷻ) says:

﴿... فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ...﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٨٤)

﴿... And whoever of you is ill or travelling, the same number [of days on which one did not observe *ṣiyām* should be made up] from other days...﴾ (*Qur'an* 2: 184)

No wonder then, that in this month the hearts of the believers turn to their All-Merciful Lord, fearing their Lord, the Exalted, and hoping to attain His reward and the great victory (Paradise).

As the status of this act of worship is so high, it is essential to learn the *aḥkām* (rulings) that have to do with

the month of fasting so that the Muslim will know what is obligatory, in order to do it, what is *ḥarām*, in order to avoid it, and what is permissible, so that he needs not subject himself to hardship by depriving himself of it.

This book is a summary of the rulings, etiquette and Sunnah of fasting. May Allah make it of benefit to myself and my Muslim brothers. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds.

# MATTERS RELATED TO FASTING

## DEFINITION OF ŞIYĀM (FASTING)

*Şiyām* in Arabic means abstaining; in Islam it means abstaining from things that break the fast, from dawn until sunset, having first made the intention (*an-niyyah*) to fast.

## RULING ON FASTING

The Muslim ummah (nation) unanimously agree that fasting the month of Ramaḍān is obligatory, the evidence for which is in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى  
الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ﴾ (١٨٣)

(سورة البَقَرَة : ١٨٣)

﴿O' you who believe! Observing *Şiyām* [the fasting] is prescribed for you as it was prescribed

for those before you, that you may become *al-Muttaqoon* [the pious]. ﴿ (Qur'an 2: 183)

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

*“Islam is built on five (pillars)...”* — among which he mentioned fasting in Ramaḍān.<sup>1</sup>

Whoever breaks the fast during Ramaḍān without a legitimate excuse has committed a serious major sin. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, describing a dream that he had seen:

*“... until I was at a mountain, where I heard loud voices. I asked, ‘What are these voices?’ They said, ‘This is the howling of the people of Hell-fire.’ Then I was taken to another place, and I saw people hanging from their hamstrings, with the corners of their mouths torn and dripping with blood. I said, ‘Who are these?’ They said, ‘They are the people who broke their fast before it was the proper time to do so,’ i.e., before the time of iḥṭār.”*<sup>2</sup>

Al-Ḥāfiḍh adh-Dhahabi (may Allah have mercy on him) said,

---

<sup>1</sup> Bukhāri, *Faṭḥ al-Bāri*, 1/49.

<sup>2</sup> Ṣaḥeeḥ at-Targheeb, 1/420.

“Among the believers, it is well-established that whoever does not fast in Ramaḍān without a valid excuse is worse than an adulterer or drunkard; they doubt whether he is even a Muslim at all, and they regard him as a heretic and profligate.”

Sheikh al-Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“If a person does not fast in Ramaḍān knowing that it is *ḥarām* (unlawful) but making it *ḥalāl* (lawful) for himself to do so, he should be killed if he does not repent; and if he does it because he is immoral (but believes it is *ḥarām*), then punish him for not fasting.”<sup>3</sup>

## THE VIRTUES OF FASTING

The virtues of fasting are great indeed, and one of the things reported in the *ṣaḥeeḥ* hadiths (authenticated Prophet’s sayings) is that Allah has chosen fasting for worshipping Him, and He will reward it and multiply the reward without measure, as He (ﷻ) says in the hadith *qudsi*:

*“Except for fasting which is only for My sake, and I will reward him for it.”*<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> *Majmoo’ al-Fatāwa*, 25/265.

<sup>4</sup> Bukhāri, *Fath al-Bāri*, hadith no. 1904; *Ṣaḥeeḥ at-Targheeb*, 1/407.



*“Fasting has no equal”<sup>5</sup>, and, “The du‘ā’ (invocation) of the fasting person will not be unanswered.”<sup>6</sup>*

*“The fasting person has two moments of joy: One when he breaks his fast and one when he meets his Lord and rejoices over his fasting.”<sup>7</sup>*

*“Fasting will intercede for a person on the Day of Judgement, and will say, ‘O’ Lord, I prevented him from his food and physical desires during the day, so let me intercede for him’.”<sup>8</sup>*

*“The smell that comes from the mouth of a fasting person is better in Allah’s sight than the scent of musk.”<sup>9</sup>*

*“Fasting is a protection and a strong fortress that keeps a person safe from the Fire.”<sup>10</sup>*

---

<sup>5</sup> Nasā’i, 4/165; *Ṣaḥeeḥ at-Targheeb*, 1/413.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Bayhaqi, 3/345; *Silsilat al-aḥādeeth aṣ-Ṣaḥeeḥah*, hadith no. 1797.

<sup>7</sup> Muslim, 2/807.

<sup>8</sup> Aḥmad, 2/174. Al-Haythami classed its *isnād* as *ḥasan* in *al-Majma’*, 3/181. See also *Ṣaḥeeḥ at-Targheeb*, 1/411.

<sup>9</sup> Muslim, 2/807.

<sup>10</sup> Aḥmad, 2/402; *Ṣaḥeeḥ at-Targheeb*, 1/411; *Ṣaḥeeḥ al-Jāmi’*, hadith no. 3880.

*“Whoever fasts one day for the sake of Allah, Allah will remove his face seventy years’ distance from the Fire.”<sup>11</sup>*

*“Whoever fasts one day seeking the pleasure of Allah, the Almighty, All-Merciful, if that is the last day of his life, he will enter Paradise.”<sup>12</sup>*

*“In Paradise, there is a gate called ar-Rayyān, through it, those who fast will enter, and no one will enter it except them; when they have entered, it will be locked, and no one else will enter through it.”<sup>13</sup>*

Fasting Ramaḍān is a pillar of Islam and in it there is a night (the night the Qur’aan was revealed) that is better than a thousand months.

*“When Ramaḍān begins, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are closed, and the devils are put in chains.”<sup>14</sup>*

*“Fasting Ramaḍān is equivalent to fasting ten months.”<sup>15</sup>*

---

<sup>11</sup> Muslim, 2/808.

<sup>12</sup> Aḥmad, 5/391; *Ṣaḥeeḥ at-Targheeb*, 1/412.

<sup>13</sup> Bukhārī, *Faṭḥ al-Bārī*, hadith no. 1797.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, hadith no. 3277.

<sup>15</sup> Aḥmad, 5/280; *Ṣaḥeeḥ at-Targheeb*, 1/421.

*“Whoever fasts Ramaḍān out of faith and with the hope of reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven.”<sup>16</sup>*

*“At the breaking of every fast, Allah will choose people to free from Hell-fire.”<sup>17</sup>*

## THE BENEFITS OF FASTING

There is much wisdom and many benefits in fasting, which have to do with the *taqwa* (piety) mentioned by Allah (ﷻ) in the *āyah*:

(سورة البَقَرَة : ١٨٣)      ﴿... لَمَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ﴾

﴿... that you may become *al-Muttaqoon* [the pious].﴾

(*Qur'an* 2: 183)

The interpretation of this is that if a person refrains from *ḥalāl* things hoping to earn the pleasure of Allah (ﷻ) and out of fear of His punishment, it will be easier for him to refrain from doing *ḥarām* things.

If a person is hungry, this will keep many of his other faculties away from feeling hunger or desire; but if his

<sup>16</sup> Bukhāri, *Faṭḥ al-Bāri*, hadith no. 37.

<sup>17</sup> Aḥmad, 5/256; *Ṣaḥeeḥ at-Targheeb*, 1/419.

stomach is satisfied, his tongue, eye, hand and private parts will start to feel hungry. Fasting leads to the defeat of *Shayṭān* (Satan); it controls desires and protects one's faculties.

When the fasting person feels hunger, he experiences how the poor people feel, so he has compassion towards them and gives them something to ward off their hunger. Hearing about them is not the same as sharing their suffering, just as a rider does not understand the hardship of walking unless he gets down and walks.

Fasting trains one's will to avoid *ḥarām* desires and keep away from sins; it helps a person to overcome his own nature and to wean himself away from habits. It also trains a person to get used to being organized and punctual, which will solve the problem that many people have of being disorganized, if only they realized.

Fasting is also a demonstration of the unity of the Muslims, as the ummah fast and break their fast at the same time.

Fasting also provides a great opportunity for those who are calling others to Allah (ﷻ). In this month, many people come to the mosque for the first time and so do those who have not been to the mosque for a long time, and their hearts are open. So, we must make the best of this opportunity by preaching them in a gentle manner, teaching appropriate lessons and speaking beneficial words, whilst

co-operating in righteousness and good deeds. The *dā'iyah* (preacher) should not be so preoccupied with others that he forgets his own soul and becomes like a wick that lights the way for others while it is itself consumed.

## ETIQUETTE AND SUNNAH OF FASTING

Some aspects are obligatory (*wājib*) and others are recommended (*mustaḥab*).

We should make sure that we eat and drink something at *saḥoor* (last meal before dawn), and that we delay it until just before the *adhān* (call for prayer) of *Fajr* (dawn). The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

*“Have saḥoor, for in saḥoor there is blessing (barakah).”*<sup>18</sup>

*“Saḥoor is blessed food, and it involves being different from the people of the Book. What a good saḥoor for the believer is a saḥoor of dates.”*<sup>19</sup>

*“Don’t delay ifṭār (breaking fast at sunset) because the Prophet said: ‘The people will be fine so long as they do not delay ifṭār’.”*<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Bukhāri, *Fath al-Bāri*, 4/139.

<sup>19</sup> Abu Dāwood, hadith no. 2345; *Ṣaḥeeḥ at-Targheeb*, 1/448.

<sup>20</sup> Bukhāri, *Fath al-Bāri*, 4/198.

Break your fast in the manner described in the hadith narrated by Anas (رضي الله عنه) (may Allah be pleased with him):

*“The Prophet used to break his fast with fresh dates before praying; if fresh dates were not available, he would eat (dried) dates; if dried dates were not available, he would have a few sips of water.”*<sup>21</sup>

After *iftār*, one should recite the words reported in the following hadith. Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ), when he would break his fast, would say:

*“Dhahaba adh-Dhama’, wa ’btallat al-’urooq, wa thabat al-ajru in shā’ Allah (Thirst is gone, veins are flowing again, and the reward is certain, in shā’ Allah).”*<sup>22</sup>

Keep away from sin, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

*“When any of you is fasting, let him not commit sin...”*<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Tirmidhi, 3/79 and others. He said it is a *ḥasan* hadith. Classed as *ṣaḥeeḥ* in *al-Irwā’*, hadith no. 922.

<sup>22</sup> Abu Dāwūd, 2/765; its *isnād* was classed as *ḥasan* by ad-Dāraquṭni, 2/185.

<sup>23</sup> Bukhāri, *Fath al-Bāri*, hadith no. 1904.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

*“Whoever does not stop speaking falsehood and acting in accordance with it, Allah has no need of him giving up his food and drink.”<sup>24</sup>*

The person who is fasting should avoid all kinds of *ḥarām* actions, such as backbiting, obscenity and lies, otherwise his reward may all be lost. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

*“It may be that a fasting person gets nothing from his fast except hunger.”<sup>25</sup>*

1. Among the things that can destroy one's *ḥasanāt* (good deeds) and bring *sayyi'āt* (bad deeds) are: allowing oneself to be distracted by quiz-shows, soap operas, movies and sport matches, idle gatherings, hanging about in the streets with evil people and time-wasters, driving around for no purpose, and crowding the streets and sidewalks, so that the month of *tahajjud* (night prayers), *dhikr* (remembering Allah) and worship, for many people, becomes the month of sleeping in the day so as to avoid feeling hungry, thus missing their prayers and the opportunity to perform them in congregation, then spending their nights in entertainment and indulging in their desires. Some people even greet the month with feelings of annoyance, thinking only of the

---

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, hadith no. 1903.

<sup>25</sup> Ibn Mājah, 1/539; *Ṣaḥeeh at-Targheeb*, 1/453.

pleasures they will miss out. In Ramaḍān, some people travel to *kufr* (atheism) lands to enjoy a holiday! Even the mosques are not free of such evils as the appearance of women wearing make-up and perfume, and even the Sacred House of Allah is not free of these ills. Some people make the month a season for begging, even though they are not in need. Some of them entertain themselves with dangerous fireworks and the like, and some of them waste their time in the markets, wandering around the shops following fashions. Some of them put new products and new styles in their stores during the last ten days of the month, to keep people away from earning rewards and *ḥasanāt*.

A fasting person should not be provoked, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

*“If someone fights him or insults him, he should say, ‘I am fasting, I am fasting’.”*<sup>26</sup>

One reason for this is to remind himself and another reason is to remind his adversary. But anyone who looks at the conduct of many of those who fast will see something quite different. It is essential to exercise self-control and be calm, but we see the opposite among crazy drivers who speed up when they hear the *adhān* for *Maghrib*.

---

<sup>26</sup> Bukhāri and others. *Faṭḥ al-Bāri*, hadith no. 1894.



## 2. Not eating too much, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

*“The son of Adam fills no worse vessel than his stomach.”*<sup>27</sup>

The wise person wants to eat to live, not to live to eat. The best type of food is that which is there to be used, not that which is there to be served. But people indulge in making all kinds of food (during Ramaḍān) and treating food preparation as a virtual art form, so that housewives and servants spend all their time on making food, and this keeps them away from worship, and people spend far more on food during Ramaḍān than they do ordinarily. Thus, the month becomes the month of indigestion, fatness and gastric illness, where people eat like gluttons and drink like thirsty camels, and when they get up to pray *Tarāweeh*, they do so reluctantly, and some of them leave after the first two *rak'ahs*.

## 3. Being generous by sharing knowledge, giving money, using one's position of authority or physical strength to help others, and having a good attitude. Bukhāri and Muslim reported that Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said:

*“The Messenger of Allah was the most generous of people (in doing good), and he was most generous of all in Ramaḍān when Jibreel (Gabriel) met with*

---

<sup>27</sup> Tirmidhi, hadith no. 2380; he said, this is a *ḥasan ṣaḥeeḥ* hadith.

*him, and he used to meet him every night in Ramaḍān and teach him the Qur'an. The Messenger of Allah was more generous in doing good than a blowing wind.*"<sup>28</sup>

How can people exchange generosity for stinginess and action for laziness, to the extent that they do not do their work properly and do not treat one another properly, and they use fasting as an excuse for all this.

Combining fasting with feeding the poor is one of the means of reaching Paradise, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

*"In Paradise, there are rooms whose outside can be seen from the inside and the inside can be seen from the outside. Allah has prepared them for those who feed the poor, who are gentle in speech, who fast regularly and who pray at night when people are asleep."*<sup>29</sup>

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

*"Whoever gives food to a fasting person with which to break his fast, will have a reward equal to his, without it detracting, in the slightest, from the reward of the fasting person."*<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> Bukhāri, *Faṭḥ al-Bāri*, hadith no. 6.

<sup>29</sup> Aḥmad 5/343; Ibn Khuzaymah, hadith no. 2137. Al-Albāni said in his footnote, its *isnād* is *ḥasan* because of other corroborating reports.

<sup>30</sup> Tirmidhi, 3/171; *Ṣaḥeḥ at-Targheeb*, 1/451.

Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said:

“What is meant is that he should feed him until he is satisfied.”<sup>31</sup>

A number of the *Salaf*,<sup>32</sup> may Allah have mercy on them, preferred the poor to themselves when feeding them at the time of *iftār*. Among these were ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه), Mālik ibn Dinār, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and others. ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar would not break his fast unless there were orphans and poor people with him.

## WHAT SHOULD BE DONE DURING THIS GREAT MONTH?

4. Preparing oneself and one’s environment for worship, hastening to repent and return to Allah (ﷻ), rejoicing at the onset of the month, fasting properly, having the right frame of mind and fearing Allah when praying *Tarāweeh*, not feeling tired during the middle ten days of the month, seeking *Laylat al-Qadr* (the Night of Decree), reading the entire Qur’an time after time, trying to weep and trying to understand what you are reading. ‘Umrah during Ramaḍān is equivalent to a Ḥajj, and charity given during this

---

<sup>31</sup> *Al-Ikhtiyārāt al-Fiqhiyyah*, p. 109.

<sup>32</sup> Early pious generations of Islam.

virtuous time is multiplied, and *I'tikāf* (seclusion in the mosque for worship) is confirmed (as Sunnah).

5. There is nothing wrong with congratulating one another at the beginning of the month. The Prophet (ﷺ) used to tell his Companions the good news of the onset of Ramaḍān, and urge them to make the most of it. Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

‘There has come to you Ramaḍān, a blessed month. Allah has made it obligatory to you to fast (this month). During it, the gates of Paradise are opened and the gates of Hell are locked, and the devils are chained up. In it, there is a night that is better than a thousand months, and whoever is deprived of its goodness is deprived indeed.’”<sup>33</sup>

## SOME OF THE AḤKĀM (RULINGS) ON FASTING

6. There is the kind of fasting that must be done on consecutive days, like fasting in Ramaḍān, or fasting to expiate for killing someone by mistake, divorcing one's wife by *Dhihār*,<sup>34</sup> or having intercourse during the day in Ramaḍān.

---

<sup>33</sup> Nasā'i, 4/129; *Ṣaḥeeḥ at-Targheeb*, 1/490.

<sup>34</sup> A *jāhili* (pre-Islamic) form of divorce in which a man says to his wife, “You are to me like the back of my mother” - Translator.

Also, one who makes a vow to fast consecutive days must fulfil it.

There is also the other kind of fasting which does not have to be done on consecutive days, such as making up for the days missed in Ramaḍān, fasting ten days if one does not have a sacrifice during pilgrimage, fasting for “*kaffārat al-yameen*” [expiation for an unfulfilled oath (according to the majority)], fasting to compensate for violating the conditions of *iḥrām* (state of ritual consecration during pilgrimage), and fasting in fulfillment of a vow in cases where one did not have the intention of fasting consecutive days.

7. Voluntary fasts make up for any shortfall in obligatory fasts. Examples of voluntary fasts include ‘*Āshoorā*’ (The tenth day of Muḥarram), ‘*Arafāh*’ (The 9th day of Dhul-Hijjah), *al-Ayyām al-Beed*,<sup>35</sup> Mondays and Thursdays, six days of Shawwāl, and fasting more during Muḥarram and Sha‘bān, as these are all Sunnah.

8. It is not permitted to single out a Friday for fasting<sup>36</sup> or to fast on a Saturday, unless it is an obligatory fast<sup>37</sup> — what is meant is singling it out without a reason. It is not permitted to fast for an entire lifetime, or to fast for two days or more

---

<sup>35</sup> The 13th, 14th and 15th of the hijri lunar months - Translator.

<sup>36</sup> Bukhārī, *Fath al-Bārī*, hadith no. 1985.

<sup>37</sup> Reported and classed as *ḥasan* by Tirmidhi, 3/111.

without a break, i.e., to fast two or three days without a break in between.

It is *ḥarām* to fast on the two ‘*Eid* days, or on *Ayyām at-Tashreeq*, which are the 11th, 12th and 13th of Dhul-Ḥijjah, because these are the days of eating and drinking and remembering Allah (ﷻ), but it is permissible for the one who does not have a sacrifice to fast them (*Ayyām at-Tashreeq*) in Minā, Makkah at the time of Ḥajj.

## HOW THE ONSET OF RAMAḌĀN IS DETERMINED

9. The onset of Ramaḍān is confirmed by the sighting of the new moon, or by the completion of thirty days of Sha‘bān, the previous month. Whoever sees the crescent of the new moon or hears about it from a trustworthy source is obliged to fast.

Using calculations to determine the onset of Ramaḍān is a *bid‘ah* (innovation), because the hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ) clearly states:

*“Fast when you see it (the new moon) and break your fast when you see it.”*

If an adult, sane, trustworthy, reliable Muslim, who has good eyesight, says that he has seen the crescent with his

own eyes, then we should take his word for it and act accordingly (i.e., start fasting).

## WHO IS OBLIGED TO FAST?

10. Fasting is an obligation to every adult, sane, settled (i.e., not travelling) Muslim who is able to fast and has no legitimate excuse, such as *ḥayḍ* (menstruation) or *nifās* (post-natal bleeding), for women, and illness and travel for men and women, to prevent him or her from fasting.

A person is deemed to have reached adulthood when any one of the following three things occur: Emission of semen, whether in a wet dream or otherwise; growth of coarse pubic hair around the private parts; attainment of fifteen years of age. In the case of females, there is a fourth condition, namely menstruation; when a girl reaches maturity (starts her periods) she is obliged to fast even if she has not yet reached the age of ten.

11. Children should be instructed to fast at the age of seven, if they are able to, and some scholars said that a child may be smacked at the age of ten if he does not fast, just as in the case of *ṣalāh*.<sup>38</sup> The child will be rewarded for fasting, and the parents will also be rewarded for bringing him up properly and guiding him to do good. Ar-Rubayyi‘ bint

---

<sup>38</sup> *Al-Mughni*, 3/90.

Mu‘awwidh (رضي الله عنه) (may Allah be pleased with her) said, speaking about Ramaḍān when it was made obligatory:

*“We used to make our children fast, and we would make for them a toy made out of wool. If any one of them started to cry for food, we would give him that toy to play with until it was time to break the fast.”*<sup>39</sup>

Some people do not think it is important to tell their children to fast; indeed, a child may be enthusiastic about fasting and may be capable of doing it, but his father or mother may tell him not to fast, out of so-called “pity” for him. They do not realize that true pity and compassion consist of making him get used to fasting.

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ  
وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاطٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا  
أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ﴾ (سورة التحريم: ٦)

‘O’ you who believe! Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire [Hell] whose fuel is men and stones, over which are [appointed] angels stern [and] severe, who disobey not [from executing] the

<sup>39</sup> Bukhāri, *Faṭḥ al-Bāri*, hadith no. 1960.



Commands they receive from Allah, but do that which they are commanded.﴾ (Qur'an 66: 6)

Extra attention must be paid to the matter of a girl's fasting when she has just reached maturity, because she may fast when she has her period, out of shyness, and then not make up for the missed fast later.

12. If a *kāfir* (disbeliever) becomes Muslim, or a child reaches puberty, or an insane comes to his senses during the day in Ramaḍān, they should refrain from eating for the rest of the day, because they are now among those who are obliged to fast, but they do not have to make up for the days of Ramaḍān that they have missed, because at that time they were not among those who are obliged to fast.

13. The insane people are not responsible for their deeds (their deeds are not being recorded), but if a person is insane at times and sane at other times, he must fast during his periods of sanity, and is excused during his periods of insanity. If he becomes insane during the day, this does not invalidate his fast, just as in the case if someone became unconscious because of illness or some other reason, because he had the intention of fasting when he was sane.<sup>40</sup> A similar case is the ruling governing epileptics.

---

<sup>40</sup> *Majālis Shahr Ramaḍān* by Ibn 'Uthaymeen, p. 28.

14. If someone dies during Ramaḍān, there is no “debt” of fasting on him or his heirs with regard to the remaining days of the month.

15. If someone does not know that it is *farḍ* (obligatory) to fast Ramaḍān, or that it is *ḥarām* to eat or have sexual intercourse during the day in this month, then according to the majority of scholars, this excuse is acceptable, as is also the case for a new convert to Islam, a Muslim living in *Dār al-Gharb* (non-Muslim lands) and a Muslim who grew up among the *kuffār* (disbelievers). But a person, who grew up among the Muslims and was able to ask questions and find out, has no excuse.

## TRAVELLERS

16. For a traveller to be allowed to break his fast, certain conditions must be met. His journey should be lengthy, or be known as travelling (although there is a well-known difference of opinion among the scholars on this matter), beyond the city and its suburbs. (The majority of scholars say that he should not break his fast before passing the city limits. They say that a journey has not really begun until a person passes the city limits, and a person who is still in the city is “settled” and “present.” Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿... فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ ...﴾ (١٨٥)

«... So whoever of you sights [the crescent on the first night of] the month [of Ramaḍān, i.e., is present at his home], must observe *ṣiyām* [fasts] that month...» (Qur'an 2: 185)

One is not counted as a traveller until he has left the city; if he is still within the city, he is regarded as one who is settled, so he is not permitted to break his fast or shorten his prayers. His journey should also not be a journey for sinful purposes (according to the majority of scholars), or for the purpose of trying to get out to avoid fasting.

17. The traveller is allowed to break his fast if the above conditions are met, according to the consensus of the ummah (nation), whether he is able to continue fasting or not, and whether it is difficult for him to fast or not. Even if his journey is easy and he has someone to serve him, he is still permitted to break his fast and shorten his prayers.<sup>41</sup>

18. Whoever is determined to travel in Ramaḍān should not have the intention of breaking his fast until he has actually started travelling, because something may happen to prevent him from setting out on his journey.<sup>42</sup>

The traveller should not break his fast until he has passed beyond the inhabited area of his town; once he has passed the city limits, he may break his fast. Similarly, if he

---

<sup>41</sup> *Majmoo' al-Fatāwa*, 25/210.

<sup>42</sup> *Tafseer al-Qurtubi*, 2/278.

is flying, once the plane has taken off and has gone beyond the city limits, he may break his fast. If the airport is outside his city, he can break his fast there, but if the airport is within his city or attached to it, he should not break his fast in the airport because he is still inside his own city.

19. If the sun sets and he breaks his fast on the ground, then the plane takes off and he sees the sun, he does not have to stop eating, because he has already completed his fasting day, and there is no way to repeat an act of worship that is finished. If the plane takes off before sunset and he wants to complete that day fasting during the journey, he should not break his fast until the sun has set wherever he is in the air. The pilot is not permitted to take the plane down to an altitude from which the sun cannot be seen just for the purpose of breaking the fast, because this would just be a kind of trickery, but if he brings the plane down lower for a genuine reason, and the disk of the sun disappears as a result, then he may break his fast.<sup>43</sup>

20. Whoever travels to a place and intends to stay there for more than four days, must fast, according to the majority of scholars. So if a person travels to study abroad for a period of some months or years, then according to the majority of scholars — including the four Imams — he is regarded as

---

<sup>43</sup> From the *Fatāwa* of Sheikh Ibn Bāz, issued verbally.

one who is “settled” there and so he has to fast and perform his prayers both in full.

If a traveller passes through a city other than his own, he does not have to fast, unless his stay there is longer than four days, in which case he must fast, because the rulings that apply to those who are settled apply also to him.<sup>44</sup>

21. Whoever begins fasting while he is “settled” then embarks on a journey during the day is allowed to break his fast, because Allah, the Almighty, All-Merciful, has made setting out in general, a legitimate excuse not to fast.

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَمَنْ كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَتْيَامٍ أُخْرٍ...﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٨٥)

﴿... And whoever of you is ill or travelling, the same number [of days on which one did not observe *ṣiyām* must be made up for] from other days...﴾ (Qur'an 2: 185)

22. A person who habitually travels is permitted not to fast if he has a home to which he returns, such as a courier who travels to serve the interests of the Muslims. (And also taxi drivers, pilots and airline employees, even if their travel is daily — but they have to make up for the missed *ṣiyām*,

<sup>44</sup> *Fatāwa ad-Da'wah* by Ibn Bāz, 977.

later). The same applies to sailors who have a home on land; but if a sailor has his family and all that he needs with him on the ship, and is constantly travelling, then he is not allowed to break his fast or shorten his prayers. If nomadic bedouins are travelling from their winter home to their summer home, or vice versa, they are allowed to break their fast and shorten their prayers; but once they have settled in either their summer home or their winter home, they should not break their fast or shorten their prayers, even if they are following their flocks.<sup>45</sup>

23. If a traveller arrives during the day, there is a well-known dispute among the scholars as to whether he should stop eating and drinking or not.<sup>46</sup> But to be on the safe side, he should stop eating and drinking, i.e., should fast, out of respect for the month, but he has to make up for the day later, if he does not stop eating and drinking after his arrival.

24. If he starts Ramaḍān in one city, then travels to another city, where the people there started fasting before him or after him, then he should follow the ruling governing the people to whom he has travelled, so he should only end Ramaḍān when they end Ramaḍān, even if it means that he is fasting for more than thirty days, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

---

<sup>45</sup> *Majmoo' al-Fatāwa*, Ibn Taymiyyah, 25/213.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, 25/212.

*“Fast when everyone else is fasting, and break your fast when everyone else is breaking the fast.”*

If it means that his fast is less than twenty-nine days, he must make up for it, after ‘Eid, because the hijri month cannot be less than twenty-nine days.<sup>47</sup>

## THE SICK

25. In the event of any sickness that makes people feel unwell, a person is allowed not to fast. The basis for this is the *āyah* (verse):

﴿وَمَنْ كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَتْيَامٍ أُخَرٌ...﴾ (سورة البقرة: ١٨٥)

﴿... And whoever is ill or travelling, the same number [of days on which one did not observe *ṣiyām* must be made up for] from other days...﴾

(*Qur'an* 2: 185)

But if the ailment is minor, such as cough or headache, then it is not a reason to break one's fast.

If there is a medical proof, or a person knows from his usual experience, or he is certain that fasting will make his illness worse or delay his recovery, he is permitted to break

<sup>47</sup> *Fatāwa ash-Sheikh ‘Abdul-‘Azeez ibn Bāz: Fatāwa aṣ-Ṣiyām.*

his fast; indeed, it is disliked (*makrooh*) for him to fast in such cases. If a person is seriously ill, he does not have to have the intention during the night to fast the following day, even if there is a possibility that he may be well in the morning, because what counts is the present moment.

26. If one's fasting will cause his unconsciousness, he should break his fast and make up for it later on.<sup>48</sup> If a person falls unconscious during the day and recovers before *Maghrib* (sunset) or after, his fast is still valid, so long as he was fasting in the morning; if he is unconscious from *Fajr* (Dawn) until *Maghrib*, then according to the majority of scholars, his fast is not valid. According to the majority of scholars, it is obligatory for a person who falls unconscious to make up for his *ṣiyām* later on, no matter how long he was unconscious.<sup>49</sup> Some scholars issued *fatāwa* to the effect that a person who falls unconscious or takes sleeping pills or receives a general anaesthetic for a genuine reason, and becomes unconscious for three days or less, must make up for the missed fasting later on, because he is regarded as being like one who sleeps; if he is unconscious for more than three days, he does not have to make up for the missed fasts, because he is regarded as being like one who is insane.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> *Al-Fatāwa*, 25/217.

<sup>49</sup> *Al-Mughni ma' ash-Sharḥ al-Kabeer*, 1/412, 3/32; *al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaytiyyah*, 5/268.

<sup>50</sup> *Fatāwa ash-Sheikh 'Abdul-'Azeez ibn Bāz*.



27. If a person feels extreme hunger or thirst, and fears that he may die, or that some of his faculties may be irreparably damaged, and has rational grounds for believing this to be so; he may break his fast and make up for it later on, because saving one's life is obligatory. But it is not permissible to break one's fast because of a bearable hardship or because one feels tired or is afraid of some merely expected or imagined illness. People who work in physically demanding jobs are not permitted to break their fast, and they must have the intention at night of fasting the following day. If they cannot stop working and they are afraid that some harm may befall them during the day, or they face some extreme hardship that causes them to break their fast, then they should eat only what is enough to help them bear the hardship, then they should refrain from eating until sunset, and they have to make up for the missed fast later. Workers in physically demanding jobs, such as those working with furnaces and smelting metals, should try to change their hours of duty so that they may work at night, or take their holidays during Ramaḍān, or even take unpaid leave. But if this is not possible, then they should look for another job, where they can combine their religious and worldly duties.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> *Fatāwa al-Lajnah ad-Dā'imah*, 10/233, 235.

﴿... وَمَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا ۖ وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ...﴾  
 (سورة الطلاق: ٢-٣)

«... And whoever fears Allah, Allah will make a way for him to get out [of every difficulty]. And [Allah] will provide him from [sources] he could never imagine...» (Qur'an 65: 2-3)

Students' exams are no excuse for breaking one's fast during Ramaḍān, and it is not permissible to obey one's parents in breaking the fast because of having exams, because there is no obedience to any created being if it involves disobedience to the Creator.<sup>52</sup>

28. The ailing person who hopes to recover should wait until he gets better, then makes up for the fasts he has missed; but he is not allowed just to feed the poor. The person who is suffering from a chronic illness and has no hope of recovery, and elderly people who are unable to fast, should feed a poor person with half a *ṣā'* (a cubic weight measure) of the staple food of his country for every day that he has missed (Half a *ṣā'* is roughly equivalent to one and a half kilograms of rice or wheat). It is permissible for them to do this all at once, on one day at the end of the month, or to feed one poor person every day. One has to do this by giving actual food, because of the wording of the *āyah* —

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 10/241.

he cannot do it by giving money to the poor.<sup>53</sup> But he can give money to a trustworthy person or charitable organization to buy food and distribute it to the poor on his behalf.

If a sick person does not fast in Ramaḍān, waiting to recover, so that he can make up for the missed fasting days later, then he finds out that his sickness is chronic, he has to feed a poor person for every day that he did not fast.<sup>54</sup> If a person is waiting to recover from his illness and hopes to get better, but then dies, there is no “fasting debt” owed by him or his heirs. If a person’s sickness is considered to be chronic, he does not fast but feeds the poor instead, then advances in medical science prove that there is a cure, which he can use and get better; he does not have to make up for the fasts he has missed, because he did what he had to do at the time.<sup>55</sup>

29. If a person is sick, then recovers, and is able to make up for the missed fasts, but does not do so before he dies, then money should be taken from his estate to feed a poor person for every day that he had missed. If any of his relatives wants to fast on his behalf, then this is right, because it is reported in *Ṣaḥeeḥayn* (Bukhāri and Muslim) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

---

<sup>53</sup> Op.cit, 10/198.

<sup>54</sup> *Fatāwa* of Sheikh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen.

<sup>55</sup> *Fatāwa al-Lajnah ad-Dā’imah*, 10/195.

*“Whoever dies owing some fasts, let his heir fast on his behalf.”<sup>56</sup>*

## THE ELDERLY

30. The very elderly who have lost their strength and are getting weaker every day as death approaches, do not have to fast, and they are allowed not to fast so long as fasting would be too difficult for them. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said, concerning the *āyah*:

﴿... وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ ...﴾

(سورة البقرة: ١٨٤)



﴿... And as for those who can hardly afford it [fasting], [e.g., the aged and the sick, etc.], they [either fast or] feed a poor person [for every day]...﴾  
(Qur'an 2: 184)

According to a hadith from Bukhāri:

*“This has not been abrogated. It refers to the old man and the old woman who cannot fast, so they should feed a poor person for every day.”<sup>57</sup>*

<sup>56</sup> *Fatāwa al-Lajnah ad-Dā'imah*, the volume on *ad-Da'wah*, 806.

<sup>57</sup> Bukhāri, *Kitāb at-Tafseer*.

Those who have become senile and confused do not have to fast or do anything else, and their family do not have to do anything on their behalf, because such people are no longer counted as responsible. If they are of sound mind sometimes and confused at other times, they have to fast when they are all right and they do not have to fast when they are confused.<sup>58</sup>

31. For those who are fighting an enemy or are being besieged by an enemy, if fasting would make them too weak to fight, they are allowed to break the fast, even if they are not travelling. If they need to break their fast before fighting, they can break their fast. The Prophet (ﷺ) said to his Companions once, before fighting:

*“In the morning you are going to meet your enemy and not fasting will make you stronger, so do not fast.”*<sup>59</sup>

This is also the preferred opinion of Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah. The scholars of Damascus also issued *fatāwa* (formal legal opinions) to the same effect when the Tatars attacked their city.

32. If a person's reason for not fasting is obvious, such as illness; there is nothing wrong with him eating or drinking

---

<sup>58</sup> *Majālis Shaḥr Ramaḍān* by Ibn ‘Uthaymeen, p. 28.

<sup>59</sup> Muslim, hadith no. 1120.

openly, but if the reason is hidden, such as menstruation, it is better to eat and drink in secret, so as not to attract accusations and the like.

## AN-NIYYAH (INTENTION) IN FASTING

33. *An-Niyyah* is a required condition in *fard* (obligatory) fasts, and in other obligatory fasts such as making up for missed fasts or fasts done as an act of expiation (*kaffārah*), because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

*“There is no fast for the person who did not intend to fast from the night before.”*<sup>60</sup>

The intention may be made at any point during the night, even if it is just a moment before *Fajr*. *An-Niyyah* means the resolution in the heart to do something; speaking it aloud is a *bid'ah* (innovation), and anyone who knows that tomorrow is one of the days of Ramaḍān and wants to fast has to make the intention.<sup>61</sup> If a person intends to break his fast during the day, but does not do so, then according to the most correct opinion, his fast is not adversely affected by this; he is like a person who wants to speak during the

---

<sup>60</sup> Abu Dāwood, hadith no. 2454. A number of the scholars, such as Bukhāri, Nasā'i, Tirmidhi and others thought it was likely to be *mawqoof* (abeyant). See *Talkhees al-Hubayr*, 2/188.

<sup>61</sup> *Majmoo' Fatāwa Sheikh al-Islam*, 25/215.

prayer but does not speak, but some of the scholars think that he is not fasting as soon as he stops intending to fast, so to be on the safe side, he should make up for that fast later on. Apostasy, however, invalidates the intention; there is no dispute on this matter.

The person who is fasting the month of Ramaḍān does not need to repeat the intention every night during Ramaḍān; it is sufficient to have the intention at the beginning of the month. If the intention is interrupted by breaking the fast due to travel or sickness — for example — he has to renew the intention to fast when the reason for breaking the fast is no longer present.

34. Making the intention the night before is not a condition of general *nafl* (supererogatory) fasts, because of the hadith narrated by ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), who said:

*“The Messenger of Allah came to me one day and said, ‘Do you have anything (food)?’ We said, ‘No.’ He said, ‘In that case I am fasting.’”*<sup>62</sup>

But in the case of specific *nafl* fasts such as ‘*Arafah* and ‘*Ashoorā*’, it is better to be on the safe side and make the intention the night before.

35. If a person embarks on an obligatory fast, such as making up for a day missed in Ramaḍān, or fulfilling a vow,

---

<sup>62</sup> Muslim, 2/809, ‘Abdul-Bāqi.

or fasting as an act of expiation (*kaffārah*), he must complete the fast, and he is not permitted to break it unless he has a valid excuse for doing so. In the case of a *nafl* fast,

*“The person who is observing a voluntary fast has the choice either to complete the fast or to break it, even if there is no reason to break it.”*<sup>63</sup>

*“The Prophet got up fasting one morning, then he ate.”*<sup>64</sup>

But will the person who breaks his fast for no reason be rewarded for the fasting that he has already done?

Some of the scholars say that he will not be rewarded,<sup>65</sup> so it is better for the person who is observing a voluntary fast to complete it, unless there is a valid, pressing reason for him to stop fasting.

36. If a person does not know that Ramaḍān has started until after dawn, he has to stop eating and drinking for the rest of the day, and he has to make up for that day later on, according to the majority of scholars, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

---

<sup>63</sup> Aḥmad, 6/342.

<sup>64</sup> As reported in Muslim, in the story of the Hais (a type of food) that was given to him as a gift when he was in ‘Ā’ishah’s house; hadith no. 1154, ‘Abdul-Bāqi.

<sup>65</sup> *Al-Mawsoo‘ah al-Fiqhiyyah*, 28/13.



*“There is no fasting for the one who does not have the intention to fast from the night before.”<sup>66</sup>*

37. If a prisoner or captive knows that Ramaḍān has begun by sighting the moon himself or by being told by a trustworthy person, he has to fast. If he does not know when the month is beginning, he must try to work it out for himself and act according to what he thinks is most likely. If he later finds out that his fasting coincided with Ramaḍān, this is fine according to the majority of scholars; and if his fasting came after Ramaḍān, this is also fine according to the majority of *fuqahā'* (jurists); but if his fasting came before Ramaḍān, this is not acceptable, and he has to make up for the missed fast. If part of his fasting coincided with Ramaḍān and part of it did not, what coincided with it or came after it is fine, but what came before is not right. If the matter never becomes clear to him, then his fasting is fine; because he did the best he could, and Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope.<sup>67</sup>

## WHEN TO START AND STOP FASTING

38. Once the entire disk of the sun has disappeared, the fasting person should break his fast, and not pay any

---

<sup>66</sup> Abu Dāwood, 2454.

<sup>67</sup> *Al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah*, 28/84.

attention to the red glow that remains on the horizon, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

*“Once night comes from there and the day disappears from there, and the sun has set, the fasting person should break his fast.”*<sup>68</sup>

The Sunnah is to hasten in breaking the fast.

*“The Prophet would not pray Maghrib until he had broken his fast, if only with a sip of water.”*<sup>69</sup>

If a fasting person cannot find anything with which to break his fast, he should have the intention in his heart to break his fast, and he should not suck his finger, as some of the common people do. He should beware of breaking the fast before the correct time, because,

*“The Prophet saw some people hanging from their hamstrings with blood pouring from the corners of their mouths, and when he asked about them, he was told that they were people who broke their fast before it was time to do so.”*<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> Bukhāri, *Fath al-Bāri*, hadith no. 1954; the issue is also mentioned in *Majmoo' al-Fatāwa*, 25/216.

<sup>69</sup> Al-Ḥākim, 1/432; *Silsilat al-Aḥādeeth aṣ-Ṣaḥeeḥah*, 2110.

<sup>70</sup> This hadith is in *Ṣaḥeeḥ Ibn Khuzaymah*, hadith no. 1986, and in *Ṣaḥeeḥ at-Targheeb*, 1/420.

If a person is certain, or thinks it most likely, or is not sure whether he broke the fast before the proper time, he should make up for the missed fast later on, because the basic principle is that the day is still there and has not ended.<sup>71</sup> He should beware of relying on the word of children or untrustworthy sources, and he should also beware of the time differences among different cities and villages when he hears the *adhān* on the radio and so on.

39. When the dawn comes — which is the white light coming across the horizon in the East — the fasting person must stop eating and drinking straightaway, whether he hears the *adhān* or not. If he knows that the *Mu'adh-dhin* (caller for prayer) calls the *adhān* at dawn, he has to stop eating and drinking as soon as he hears it, but if the *Mu'adh-dhin* calls the *adhān* before *Fajr*, he does not have to stop eating and drinking when he hears it. If he does not know the usual practice, or there are differences in time among the *Mu'adh-dhins*, and he cannot determine the time of dawn for himself — as is usually the case in cities because of lighting and buildings — he should take the precaution of referring to a printed timetable, so long as he is sure that the calculations on which it is based are correct.

---

<sup>71</sup> *Fatāwa al-Lajnah ad-Dā'imah*, 10/287.

The idea of being on the safe side by stopping eating and drinking at a certain time before *Fajr*, such as ten minutes behind, is a *bid'ah*. On some timetables you can see one heading for “*imsāk*” (stopping eating and drinking) and another for *Fajr* (dawn prayer); this is something that is contrary to Islam.

40. The Muslims living in cities where there is a distinct alternation of night and day in every twenty-four hour period are obliged to fast, no matter how long the day is, so long as that distinction between night and day is there. In some places, there is no such distinction between night and day; Muslims in these places should fast according to the times in the nearest city where there is a distinct alternation of night and day.

## THINGS THAT BREAK THE FAST

41. Apart from *ḥayḍ* (menstruation) and *nifās* (post-natal bleeding), other things that can break the fast are only considered to do so, if one of the following three conditions applies: If a person knows that it breaks the fast but he ignores the matter; if he is aware of what he is doing and has not forgotten that he is fasting; if he does it of his own free will and is not forced to do it.

Among the things that break the fast are actions that involve the expulsion of bodily fluids, such as intercourse,

vomiting, menstruation and cupping; and actions that involve ingesting matter, such as eating and drinking.<sup>72</sup>

42. Other things that break the fast are those classified as being like eating or drinking, such as taking medicines and pills by mouth, or injections of nourishing substances, or blood transfusions.

Injections that are not given to replace food and drink but are used to administer medications such as penicillin and insulin, tonics or vaccinations, do not break the fast, regardless of whether they are intramuscular or intravenous.<sup>73</sup> But to be on the safe side, all these injections should be given during the night.

Kidney dialysis, whereby the blood is taken out, cleaned, and put back with some chemicals or nourishing substances such as sugars and salts added, is considered to break the fast.<sup>74</sup>

According to the most correct view, suppositories, eye-drops, ear-drops, having a tooth extracted and treating wounds do not break the fast.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup> *Majmoo' al-Fatāwa*, 25/148.

<sup>73</sup> *Fatāwa Ibn Ibrāhīm*, 4/189.

<sup>74</sup> *Fatāwa al-Lajnah ad-Dā'imah*, 10/190.

<sup>75</sup> *Majmoo' Fatāwa Sheikh al-Islam*, 25/233, 25/245.

Puffers used for ‘asthma’ do not break the fast, because this is just compressed gas that goes to the lungs — it is not food, and it is needed at all times, in Ramaḍān and at other times.

Having a blood sample taken does not break the fast and is permissible because it is something that is needed.<sup>76</sup>

Medicines used by gargling do not break the fast so long as they are not swallowed. If a person has a tooth filled and feels the taste of it in his throat, this does not break his fast.<sup>77</sup>

## THE FOLLOWING THINGS DO NOT BREAK THE FAST

- \* Having the ears syringe; nose drops and nasal sprays — so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.
- \* Tablets that are placed under the tongue to treat angina and other conditions — so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.
- \* Anything inserted into the vagina, such as pessaries, douches, scopes or fingers for the purpose of a medical examination.

---

<sup>76</sup> *Fatāwa ad-Da‘wah: Ibn Bāz*, no. 979.

<sup>77</sup> From the *Fatāwa* of Sheikh ‘Abdul-‘Azeez ibn Bāz, issued verbally.

- \* Insertion of a scope or intrauterine device (IUD or “coil”) and the like into the uterus.
- \* Insertion into the urethra — for males or females — of a catheter, opaque dye for diagnostic imaging, medication or solutions for cleansing the bladder.
- \* Dental fillings, tooth extractions, cleaning of the teeth, use of *siwāk* or toothbrush — so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.
- \* Rinsing, gargling or applying topical mouth sprays — so long as one avoids swallowing anything that reaches the throat.
- \* Subcutaneous, intramuscular or intravenous injections — except for those used to provide nourishment.
- \* Oxygen Anaesthetic gases — so long as the patient is not given nourishing solutions.
- \* Medications absorbed through the skin, such as creams and patches used to administer medicine and chemicals.
- \* Insertion of a catheter into veins for diagnostic imaging or treatment of blood vessels in the heart or other organs.
- \* Use of a laparoscope (instrument inserted through a small incision in the abdomen) to examine the abdominal cavity or to perform operations.

\* Taking biopsies or samples from the liver or other organs — so long as this is not accompanied by the administration of solutions.

\* Gastroscopy — so long as this is not accompanied by the administration of solutions or other substances.

\* Introduction of any instrument or medication to the brain or spinal column.

43. Anyone who eats and drinks deliberately during the day in Ramaḍān with no valid excuse has committed a grave major sin (*kabeerah*), and has to repent and make up for that fast later on. If he broke the fast with something *ḥarām*, such as drinking alcohol, this makes his sin even worse. Whatever the case, he has to repent sincerely and do more *nafl* deeds, fasting and other acts of worship, so as to avoid having any shortfall in his record of obligatory deeds, and so that Allah, the Almighty, All-Gracious, might accept his repentance.

44. According to a report from Bukhāri:

*“If one forgets, and eats and drinks, then let him complete his fast, for Allah has fed him and given him to drink.”*<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Bukhāri, *Faṭḥ al-Bāri*, hadith no. 1933.



According to another report,

*“He does not have to make up for the fast later or offer kaffārah (expiation).”*

If a person sees someone else who is eating because he has forgotten that he is fasting, he should remind him, because of the general meaning of the *āyah*:

﴿... أَنْ تَعْتَدُوا وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ...﴾

(سورة المائدة: ٢)

﴿... Help one another in righteousness and piety...﴾

(*Qur'an* 5: 2)

And the hadith, “*if I forget, remind me*” and because of the principle that this is an evil action (*munkar*) that must be changed.<sup>79</sup>

45. Those who need to break their fast in order to save someone whose life is in danger, may break their fast and should make up for it later on. This applies in cases where someone is drowning, or when fires need to be put out.

46. If a person is obliged to fast, but he deliberately has intercourse during the day in Ramaḍān, of his own free will, where the two “circumcised parts” (genitals) come together and the tip of the penis penetrates either the front or back

<sup>79</sup> *Majālis Shaḥr Ramaḍān*, Ibn ‘Uthaymeen, p.70.

passage, his fast will be broken, whether or not he ejaculates, and he has to repent. He should still fast for the rest of the day, but he has to make up for the fast later on, and offer expiation (*kaffārah*), because of the hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه):

*“Whilst we were sitting with the Messenger of Allah, a man came to him and said: ‘O’ Messenger of Allah! Woe to me!!’ He said, ‘What is the matter with you?’ The man said, ‘I had intercourse with my wife whilst I was fasting.’ The Messenger of Allah said, ‘Do you have a slave whom you could set free?’ The man said, ‘No.’ He said, ‘Can you fast for two consecutive months?’ The man said, ‘No.’ He said, ‘Do you have the wherewithal to feed sixty poor people?’ The man said, ‘No’...”<sup>80</sup>*

The same ruling also applies in cases of *zinā* (adultery or fornication), homosexuality and bestiality.

If a person has intercourse during the day on more than one day during Ramaḍān, he must offer expiation for each day, as well as repeating the fast for each day. Not knowing that *kaffārah* is obligatory is no excuse.<sup>81</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> Bukhāri, *Faṭḥ al-Bāri*, 4, hadith no. 1936.

<sup>81</sup> *Fatāwa al-Lajnah ad-Dā’imah*, 10/321.

47. If a man wants to have intercourse with his wife but he breaks his fast by eating first, his sin is more serious, because he has violated the sanctity of the month on two counts, by eating and by having intercourse. It is even more certain in this case that expiation is obligatory, and if he tries to get out of it, that only makes matters worse. He must repent sincerely.<sup>82</sup>

48. Kissing, hugging, embracing, touching and repeatedly looking at one's wife or concubine, if a man is able to control himself, is permissible, because it is reported in *Aṣ-Ṣaḥeeḥayn* (Bukhāri and Muslim) from 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to kiss and embrace his wives whilst he was fasting, but he was the most in control of his desire. With regard to the hadith *qudsi*,

*“He keeps away from his wife for My sake”*

— this is referring to intercourse. But if a person gets aroused quickly and is unable to control himself, then it is not permissible for him to kiss or embrace his wife, because that will lead to breaking his fast, as he cannot be sure that he will be able to avoid ejaculating or having intercourse. Allah (ﷻ) says in a hadith *qudsi*:

*“And he leaves his desire for My sake.”*

---

<sup>82</sup> *Majmoo' al-Fatāwa*, 25/262.

The Islamic guideline is that anything that leads to *ḥarām* is also *ḥarām*.

49. If a person is engaged in the act of intercourse and dawn comes, he is obliged to withdraw, and his fast will be valid even if he ejaculates after withdrawal, but if he continues having intercourse until after dawn, he has broken his fast, and he must repent, make up for the fast later, and offer expiation.

50. If morning comes and a person is in a state of *janābah* (impurity following sexual intercourse), this does not affect his fasting. He or she is permitted to delay doing *ghusl*, whether it is for *janābah* or following menstruation or post-natal bleeding, until after the sun has come up, but it is better to hasten to do *ghusl* so that one can pray.

51. If a person who is fasting sleeps and experiences a wet dream, this does not break his fast, according to scholarly consensus (*ijmāʿ*), so he should complete his fast. Delaying doing *ghusl* does not break the fast, but he should hasten to do *ghusl* so that he can pray and so that the angels will draw close to him.

52. If a person ejaculates during the day in Ramaḍān because of something that he could not have refrained from, such as touching or repeatedly looking at a woman, he must repent to Allah (ﷻ) and fast for the rest of the day, but he also has to make up for that fast later on. If a person starts to

masturbate but then stops, and does not ejaculate, then he has to repent but he does not have to make up for the fast later on, because he did not ejaculate. The person who is fasting must keep away from everything that may provoke his desire, and he must repel any bad thoughts that come to him. However, according to the most correct opinion, if he emits prostatic fluid (*madhee*), this does not break his fast.

The emission of *wadhee* (a thick sticky substance that comes out after urination, with no sense of physical pleasure) does not break the fast, and a person does not have to do *ghusl*, but he does have to do *istinjā'* (clean his private parts) and do *wuḍoo'*.<sup>83</sup>

53. One hadith explains:

*“Whoever vomits unintentionally does not have to make up for the fast later on, but whoever vomits on purpose does have to make up for the fast.”*<sup>84</sup>

A person who vomits deliberately, by sticking his finger down his throat or applying pressure to his stomach, or deliberately smelling a repulsive odour, or looking at something that could make him vomit, is obliged to make up for the fast later on. If he feels that he is about to vomit, but then it subsides by itself, this does not break his fast,

---

<sup>83</sup> *Fatāwa al-Lajnah ad-Dā'imah*, 10/279.

<sup>84</sup> *Ṣaḥeeḥ* hadith narrated by Tirmidhi, 3/89.

because it is not something that he can control; but if the vomit comes into his mouth and he swallows it back down, this does break the fast. If a person feels sick in his stomach, he does not have to suppress the urge to vomit because this could cause him harm.<sup>85</sup>

If a person unintentionally swallows something that is stuck between his teeth, or if it is so small that he could not tell it was there or spit it out, this is counted as being part of his saliva and it does not break his fast. But if it is big enough to spit out, he should spit it out. If he spits it out, it is all right, but if he swallows it, this breaks his fast. If it can be diluted in the mouth, in whole or in part, and it has an added taste or sweetness, it is *ḥarām* for him to chew it. If any of this substance reaches the throat, it breaks the fast. If a person spits out water after rinsing his mouth, his fast is not affected by any moisture or wetness that is left behind, because he cannot help it.

If a person suffers from a nosebleed, his fast is still valid, because this is something that is beyond his control.<sup>86</sup>

If he has gum ulcers or his gums bleed after using the *siwāk* (tooth-stick from the Arāk tree), it is not permissible for him to swallow the blood; he has to spit it out. However, if some blood enters his throat by accident, and he did not

---

<sup>85</sup> *Majālis Shaḥr Ramaḍān*, Ibn 'Uthaymeen, 67.

<sup>86</sup> *Fatāwa al-Lajnah ad-Dā'imah*, 10/264.

mean for that to happen, there is no need to worry. Similarly, if vomit rises in his throat then goes back down to his stomach without him intending for this to happen, his fast is still valid.<sup>87</sup>

With regard to mucus coming from the head (nose and sinuses) and phlegm coming from the chest by coughing and clearing the throat, if it is swallowed before it reaches the mouth, this does not break a person's fast, because it is a problem which all people have; but if it is swallowed after it reaches the mouth, this does break the fast. However, if it is swallowed unintentionally, it does not break the fast.

Inhaling water vapours, as may happen to people working in desalination plants, does not break the fast.<sup>88</sup>

It is disliked (*makrooh*) to taste food unnecessarily, because this carries the risk that the fast may be broken. Examples of cases where it is necessary to taste food include a mother chewing food for an infant when she has no other way to feed him, tasting food to make sure that it is all right, and tasting something when making a purchase. It is reported that Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said:

*"There is nothing wrong with tasting vinegar or anything that one wishes to buy."*<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 10/254.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 10/276.

54. Using *siwāk* is Sunnah for the one who is fasting at all times of the day, even if it is wet. If a person who is fasting uses a *siwāk* and detects some heat or other taste from it and swallows it, or if he takes the *siwāk* out of his mouth and sees saliva on it then puts it back in his mouth and swallows the saliva, this does not break his fast.<sup>90</sup> He should avoid any substance that can be diluted, such as the green *siwāk*, or *siwāk* that has any extra flavour added to it, like lemon or mint. He should spit out any small pieces that come off the *siwāk* in his mouth; he should not swallow them deliberately, but if he swallows them accidentally, there is no harm done.

55. If a fasting person is injured or suffers a nosebleed, or gets water or petrol in his mouth by accident, this does not break his fast. If he gets dust, smoke or flies in his mouth by accident, this does not break his fast either. Things that one cannot avoid swallowing, like one's own saliva, or dust from grinding flour, do not break the fast. If a person gathers a lot of saliva in his mouth then swallows it on purpose, this does not break the fast, according to the most correct opinion.<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>89</sup> Classed as *ḥasan* in *Irwa' al-Ghaleel*, 4/86; See *Fath al-Bāri*, commentary on *Bāb Ightisāl aṣ-Ṣā'im*, *Kitāb aṣ-Ṣiyām*.

<sup>90</sup> *Al-Fatāwa as-Sa'diyah*, 245.

<sup>91</sup> *Al-Mughni* by Ibn Qudāmah, 3/106.



If tears reach one's throat, or if a person applies oil to his hair or moustache, or uses henna, and then detects the taste of it in his throat, this does not break his fast. Using henna, kohl or oil does not break the fast.<sup>92</sup> This also applies to creams used to moisturize and soften the skin.

There is nothing wrong with smelling pleasant fragrances, using perfume or applying scented creams and the like. There is nothing wrong with a fasting person using *bakhoor* (incense), so long as he does not use it as snuff.<sup>93</sup>

It is better not to use toothpaste during the day, and to leave it till night-time because it is too strong.<sup>94</sup>

56. To be on the safe side, it is better for the fasting person not to be treated with cupping (*hijāmah*). There is a strong difference of opinion on this matter. Ibn Taymiyyah suggested that the one who has cupping done to him breaks his fast, but the one who does it for him does not break his fast.

57. Smoking breaks the fast, and it cannot be used as an excuse for not to fast. How can a sin be taken as an excuse!?

58. Immersing oneself in water or wrapping oneself in wet clothes in order to cool down does not break the fast. There is nothing wrong with pouring water over one's head to

---

<sup>92</sup> *Majmoo' al-Fatāwa*, 25/233, 235.

<sup>93</sup> *Fatāwa al-Lajnah ad-Dā'imah*, 10/314.

<sup>94</sup> *Majālis, Ibn 'Uthaymeen*, p.72.

have relief from heat and thirst. Swimming is disliked because it might make one break the fast (by swallowing water). If a person's work involves diving and he can be sure that he will not get water in his mouth, there is nothing wrong with this.

59. If a person eats, drinks or has intercourse, thinking that it is still night, then he realizes that dawn has already broken, there is no harm done, because the *āyah* clearly states that it is permissible to do these things until one is sure that dawn has come. 'Abdur-Razzāq reported with a *Ṣaḥeeḥ isnād* going back to Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) that he said:

*“Allah has permitted you to eat and drink so long as there is any doubt in your mind.”*<sup>95</sup>

60. If a person breaks his fast, thinking that the sun has already set when it has not, he must make up for the fast later on (according to the majority of scholars); because the principle is that it is still day, and a fact that is certain cannot be rejected in favour of something doubtful.<sup>96</sup>

61. If dawn breaks and a person has food or drink in his mouth, the *fuqahā'* are unanimous that he should spit it out, and his fast is valid. This is like the ruling on one who eats

---

<sup>95</sup> *Fatḥ al-Bāri*, 4/135; this is also the opinion of Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmoo' al-Fatāwa*, 29/263.

<sup>96</sup> Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah thought that it was not necessary for a person in this situation to make up for the fast.

or drinks because he forgets, then remembers he is fasting — if he hastens to spit out the food or drink in his mouth, his fast is still valid.

## RULINGS ON FASTING FOR WOMEN

62. A woman who has reached the age of puberty, but is too shy to tell anyone, and does not fast; has to repent and make up for the days she has missed, as well as feeding a poor person for each day, as an act of expiation for delaying her fast if the following Ramaḍān comes and she has not yet made up for those days. Her case is like that of a woman who fasts the days of her period out of shyness, and does not make up for them later.

If a woman does not know exactly how many days she has missed, she should fast until she is fairly certain that she has made up for the days she had missed from previous Ramaḍāns, and offer the expiation for delaying each day. She can do this while fasting or separately, depending on what she is able to do.

63. Except during Ramaḍān, a woman should not fast in the presence of her husband without his permission, but if he is travelling, then it does not matter.

64. When a menstruating woman sees the white substance — which is discharged by the uterus when the period is finished — by which she knows that she has now become

*ṭāhir* (pure); she should have the intention to fast from the night before and should fast. If she does not know that she has become *ṭāhir*, she should insert a piece of cotton or something similar, and if it comes out clean, she should fast, and if she starts to bleed again, she should stop fasting, whether the blood is a flow or just spotting, because it breaks the fast just as it does during her period.<sup>97</sup>

If the cessation of bleeding continues until *Maghrib*, and she has fasted with the intention from the night before, then her fast is valid. If a woman feels the movement of menstrual blood inside her, but it does not come out until after the sun has set; her fast is valid and she does not have to make up for the day later.

If a woman's period or post-natal bleeding ceases during the night, and she makes the intention to fast, but dawn comes before she is able to do *ghusl*, according to all the scholars her fast is valid.<sup>98</sup>

65. If a woman knows that her period will come tomorrow, she should still continue her intention and keep fasting; she should not break her fast until she actually sees the blood.

66. It is better for a menstruating woman to remain natural and accept what Allah (ﷻ) has decreed for her by not taking any medication to prevent her from bleeding. She

---

<sup>97</sup> *Fatāwa al-Lajnah ad-Dā'imah*, 10/154.

<sup>98</sup> *Fath al-Bāri*, 4/148.

should be content with what Allah accepts from her of breaking her fast during her period and making up for those days later. This is how the Mothers of the Believers and the women of the *salaf* were.<sup>99</sup> Moreover, there is medical evidence to prove that many of the things used to prevent bleeding are in fact harmful, and many women have suffered from irregular periods as a result of taking them. However, if a woman does that and takes something to stop the bleeding, then fasts, this is all right.

67. *Istihādah* (non-menstrual vaginal bleeding) does not have any effect on the validity of the fast.

68. If a pregnant woman miscarries and the foetus is formed or has a discernible outline of any part of the body, such as a head or hand, then her blood is *nifās*; if, however, she passes something that looks like a blood clot (*'alaq*) or a chewed piece of meat that has no discernible human features, her bleeding is *istihādah* and she has to fast, if she is able; otherwise she can break her fast and make up for it later on.<sup>100</sup> Once she becomes clean after having an operation of D&C to clean the womb, she should fast. The scholars stated that the embryo is considered to start taking shape after 80 days of pregnancy.

---

<sup>99</sup> *Fatāwa al-Lajnah ad-Dā'imah*, 10/151.

<sup>100</sup> *Fatāwa al-Lajnah ad-Dā'imah*, 10/224.

If a woman becomes clean from *nifās* before the lapse of forty days, she should fast and do *ghusl* so that she can pray.<sup>101</sup>

If the bleeding resumes within forty days after delivery, she should stop fasting, because this is still *nifās*. If the bleeding continues after the fortieth day, she should make the intention to fast and do *ghusl* (according to the majority of scholars), and any bleeding beyond the fortieth day is considered to be *istiḥāḍah* (non-menstrual bleeding) — unless it coincides with the usual time of her period, in which case it is *ḥayḍ* (menstrual blood).

If a breast-feeding woman fasts during the day and sees a spot of blood during the night, although she was clean during the day, her fast is still valid.<sup>102</sup>

69. According to the most correct opinion, a woman who is pregnant or breast-feeding is regarded as being like one who is ill, so she is permitted not to fast, and she only has to make up for the days that she missed, whether she fears for herself or for her child.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

*“Allah has lifted the obligation of fasting and part of the prayer off the traveller, and He has lifted the*

<sup>101</sup> *Al-Mughni ma' ash-Sharḥ al-Kabeer*, 1/360.

<sup>102</sup> *Fatāwa al-Lajnah aḥ-Dā'imah*, 10/150.

*obligation of fasting off the pregnant and breast-feeding woman.*"<sup>103</sup>

If a pregnant woman fasts and experiences some bleeding, her fast is still valid; this does not affect her fast at all.<sup>104</sup>

70. In the case of a woman who is obliged to fast, if her husband has intercourse with her during the day in Ramaḍān with her consent, then the ruling that applies to him also applies to her. If, however, he forces her to do that, she should do her best to resist him, and she does not have to offer expiation. Ibn 'Aqeel (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "In the case of a man who has intercourse with his wife during the day in Ramaḍān whilst she is sleeping, she does not have to offer expiation." But to be on the safe side, she should make up for that fast later on.<sup>105</sup>

A woman who knows that her husband cannot control himself should keep away from him and not adorn herself during the day in Ramaḍān.

Women have to make up for the fasts that they miss during Ramaḍān, even without their husbands' knowledge. It is not a condition for a woman to have the permission of

---

<sup>103</sup> Tirmidhi, 3/85; he said it is a *ḥasan* hadith.

<sup>104</sup> *Fatāwa al-Lajnah ad-Dā'imah*, 10/225.

<sup>105</sup> Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah was of the opinion that this did not invalidate her fast at all.

her husband for an obligatory fast. If a woman starts to observe an obligatory fast, she is not allowed to break it except for a legitimate reason. Her husband is not permitted to order her to break her fast when she is making up for a day that she has missed. He is not allowed to have intercourse with her when she is making up for a missed fast, and she is not allowed to obey him in that regard.<sup>106</sup>

In the case of voluntary fasts, a woman is not permitted to start a non-obligatory fast when her husband is present, without his permission, because of the hadith narrated by Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), according to which the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

*“No woman should fast (a non-obligatory fast) when her husband is present except with his permission.”*<sup>107</sup>

In conclusion, this is what I was able to write about issues concerning fasting. I ask Allah (ﷻ) to help us to remember Him, thank Him and worship Him properly, and to end our Ramaḍān with forgiveness, and to save us from the Fire.

May Allah bless our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his family and Companions, *Āmeen*.

---

<sup>106</sup> *Fatāwa al-Lajnah ad-Dā'imah*, 10/353.

<sup>107</sup> Bukhāri, hadith no. 4793.





## GLOSSARY

' <i>Āshoorā</i> '	عاشوراء	The tenth day of Muḥarram
<i>Adhān</i>	اذان	Call for obligatory prayer
<i>Aḥkāṁ</i>	أحكام	Sing. <i>Ḥukm</i> ; Rulings
' <i>Alaq</i>	علق	Blood clot
' <i>Arafah</i> [day]	[يوم] عرفه/ عرفات	The 9th day of Dhul-Ḥijjah
<i>An-Niyyah</i>	النية	Intention
<i>Bid'ah</i>	بدعة	Innovation
<i>Dār al-Gharb</i>	دار الغرب	Non-Muslim land
<i>Fard</i>	فرض	Obligatory
<i>Fuqahā'</i>	فُقهاء	Sing. <i>Faqeeh</i> '; Islamic jurists
<i>Ḥadeeth Qudsi</i>	حديث قُدسي	The hadith which begins by the words, "Allah says —"! Message of Allah expressed in the words of the Prophet Muhammad

<i>Ḥasanāt</i>	حَسَنَات	Sing. <i>Ḥasanah</i> ; Good deeds, reward for good-deeds
<i>Ḥayḍ</i>	حَيْض	Menstruation
<i>Iftār</i>	إِفْطَار	Breaking fast at sunset — <i>Maghrib</i> prayer
<i>Ihrām</i>	إِحْرَام	State of ritual consecration during pilgrimage
<i>Imsāk</i>	إِمْسَاك	Stopping eating and drinking for fasting
<i>I'tikāf</i>	إِعْتِكَاف	Seclusion in the mosque for worship
<i>Istiḥāḍah</i>	إِسْتِحَاضَة	Non-menstrual bleeding
<i>Janābah</i>	جَنَابَة	Impurity following sexual intercourse, wet dream, ejaculation
<i>Laylat al-Qadr</i>	لَيْلَة الْقَدَر	The Night of Decree, an odd night in the month of Ramaḍān when the Qur'an was revealed.
<i>Makrooh</i>	مَكْرُوْه	Disliked
<i>Muttaqoon</i>	مُتَّقَوْنَ	Sing. <i>Muttaqi</i> ; Objective case: <i>Muttaqeen</i> ; The pious

<i>Nafl</i>	نفل	Supererogatory worship acts
<i>Nifās</i>	نفاس	Post-natal bleeding
<i>Rak'ah</i>	ركعة	Unit of prayer — <i>Ṣalāh</i>
<i>Saḥoor</i>	سحور	Last meal before dawn, after which fasting begins
<i>Salaf</i>	سلف	The Early pious generations of Islam
<i>Sayyi'āt</i>	سيئات	Sing. <i>Sayyi'ah</i> ; Bad-deeds
<i>Siwāk</i>	سيواك	Tooth-stick from the Arāk tree
<i>Ṣiyām</i>	صيام	Fasting
<i>Tahajjud</i>	تهجد	Night prayers
<i>Tāhir</i>	طاهر	Pure, ritual purity
<i>Tarāweeḥ</i>	تراويح	Supererogatory prayer offered in the month of Ramaḍān after 'ishā' prayer
<i>Ummah</i>	أمة	Nation
<i>Zinā</i>	زنا	Adultery or fornication

## SYMBOLS USED IN THIS BOOK

(سُبْحَانَهُ) : *Subhānahu wa Ta'āla* — ‘The Exalted’

(سَلَامٌ) : *Ṣallā-Allahu ‘Alayhi wa Sallam* — ‘Blessings and  
Peace be upon him’

(سَلَامٌ) : *‘Alayhis-Salām* — ‘May peace be upon him’

(رَضِيَ) : *Raḍia Allahu ‘Anhu* — ‘May Allah be pleased with  
him’

(رَضِيَ) : *Raḍia Allahu ‘Anha* — ‘May Allah be pleased with  
her’

# TRANSLITERATION CHART

أ	a
آ . ي	ā / aa
ب	b
ت	t
ة	h or t (when followed by another Arabic word)
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z

س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	<u>dh</u>
ع	‘
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
هـ - ه - هـ	h
و	w
و (as a long vowel)	oo
ي	y

ي (as a long vowel)	ee
ء	' (Omitted in initial position)

َ	Fatḥah	a
ِ	Kasrah	i
ُ	Ḍammah	u
ّ	Shaddah	Double letter
◌	Sukoon	Absence of vowel